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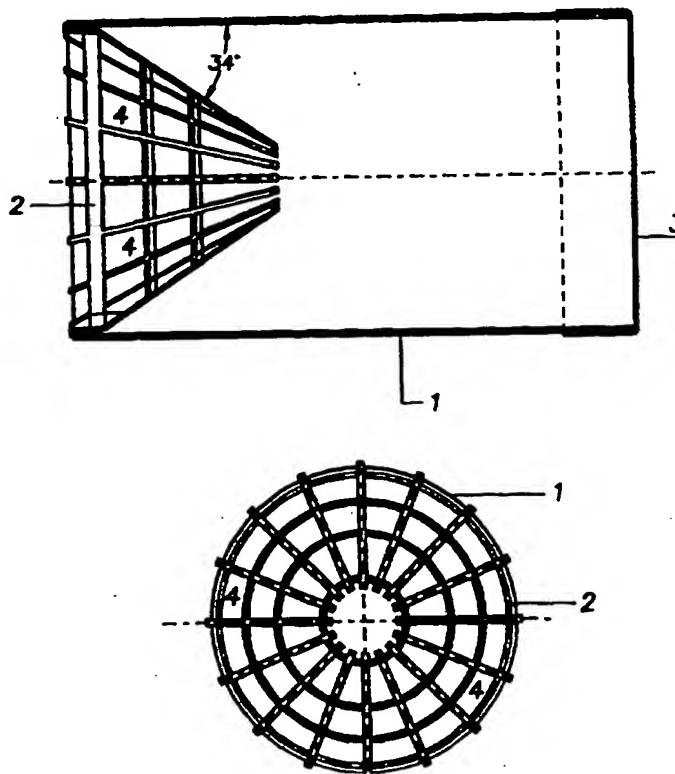
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(54) Title: EFFECTIVE, ECONOMICAL, SELECTIVE, SAFER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY METHOD OF CATCHING MUSKRATS USING PLASTIC TUBE NETS

(57) Abstract

Using tube nets placed in large numbers. The ideal size is 50 cm long and 25 to 30 cm diameter, manufactured from plastic ((1) figure 1). Sealed at the bottom ((3) figure 1) and provided at the top with one or more flaps ((6) figure 2) or throats (funnels) ((2) figure 1). Fitted with escape openings for small animals ((4) figures 1 and 2). The core of the problem is that there is currently no structural and preventive approach, and many unwanted creatures are trapped. Using tube nets placed permanently in large numbers of locations, the muskrats will be trapped while on the move, before they have chance to breed, quickly reducing the population.



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EFFECTIVE, ECONOMICAL, SELECTIVE, SAFER AND ENVIRONMENTALLY
FRIENDLY METHOD OF CATCHING MUSKRATS USING PLASTIC TUBE NETS

For 40 years the muskrat has been fought using traps,
poison and all manner of nets. With the result that there
are now more muskrats than ever in Europe - 400,000 per
year in the Netherlands alone, for example. That figure
5 could be reduced to 100,000 a year or less if the mesh of
the net were made smaller.

- The disadvantages of trapping, netting and poisoning are:
- 1) 15% of the animals trapped are not muskrats (mostly
waterfowl); the figure for poisoning is unknown.
 - 10 2) It is necessary to search out the rats and destroy
them time and again.
 - 3) It is extremely labour-intensive due to the constant
need to place and clear material.
 - 4) A lot of material is stolen and/or destroyed.
 - 15 5) It is expensive and has a limited life due to exten-
sive losses and rusting.
 - 6) A new trapper needs two years to master the skills
fully.
 - 7) Nets often hinder the water flow and quickly become
20 clogged by sand and floating debris.
 - 8) Poisons continually enter the environment and are
consumed by other animals.
 - 9) Great damage is caused to agriculture and dikes.
 - 10) Environmental and nature organisations are totally
25 opposed to these methods.
 - 11) These methods are not preventive: it is a case of
constantly trying to keep down the rat population
after they have bred.
 - 12) Tonnes of heavy metals are released into the atmos-
30 phere (zinc from the nets due to rusting).
 - 13) The results show that these methods are not effective

In the course of three years I have developed a system
for reducing and maintaining the muskrat population at a
very low level. This is achieved by placing tube nets
35 in large numbers, for example 4.000 in the Belgian pro-
vince of Limburg (covering 1/9 of Belgium).
In my area, which covers 1/4 of Limburg, I have cut the
number of catches in the course of three years from
around 6.000 to 1.000 per year. I currently have 900 nets
40 out in my area; this needs to be increased to 1.000 and
the problem will be solved.

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These nets are placed everywhere and stay in position for ever, wherever muskrats are or have been present, including at strategic locations which the rats pass in large numbers during the spring and autumn migrations. This has a preventive effect since the rats are caught before they have a chance to breed, thus leading to a rapid reduction in the rat population. The nets are made from new or recycled plastic.

There are various types, the two most common being:

- 1) a throated net (fig.1)
- 2) a net with flap (fig.2)

The throated net is the most common, being used in deep water. The nets can be used in a variety of shapes, such as square, oval, hexagonal, etc., though round is the most obvious. Several colours are also available.

The net with a flap is designed for use in shallow water. The throated net is able to expand (the throat (2) fig.1 widens), enabling the rat to enter easily but preventing escape or habituation; thereafter the rats drown.

The throat and flap contain escape holes ((4) fig.1+2) for small fry such as crabs, frogs, fish, voles, etc., so that the nets work very selectively. The ends of the nets are sealed by welding or with a cover (fig. 1+2, (3)).

The flap (fig. 2, (6)) in the flapped nets is hinged (5) this hinge is attached to the net itself or is fixed in some other way. The flap and throat can be made from PVC thread or other material.

Alternatively, both systems can be made up as a complete net and pushed into the tube. However, the cheapest, most effective and longest lasting method is to make only the throat and the flap from plastic.

The tubes, which are dug transversely into the dike, can be of various shapes and sizes, from 20 cm. to 150 cm. long and from 6 to 70cm in diameter. The ideal size is 50 cm. long and 25 to 30 cm. in diameter. There are various reasons for this: cheap, quick to position, no deep water needed, highly effective, etc.

Using this system it would even be possible to eradicate the muskrat altogether.

These throats and flaps can also be used to make normal nets, i.e. without tubes, either wholly or partly from plastic and thread.

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The advantages of these tube nets are:

- 1) No other animals are trapped by mistake.
- 2) They work all year round.
- 3) They are not stolen or destroyed (they are underwater
5 and underground and thus invisible).
- 4) Once in position, little work is required.
- 5) Cheap due to long life.
- 6) No bait or other material is needed.
- 7) A new trapper can be trained in a week.
- 10 8) If there are no muskrats we can concentrate on clearing
water and coypu in an environmentally friendly way.
- 9) The tubes do not obstruct the water flow and do not get
dirty or become clogged.
- 15 10) No poison or traps needed: more environmentally
friendly and safer.
- 11) This system will enable the muskrat population to be
reduced to and maintained at an acceptable level within
a few years.
- 12) No more damage to farm crops and dikes.
- 20 13) Environmental and nature organisations are very happy
with this system (Nature Help Centre, Opglabbeek,
Limburg, Belgium).
- 14) Less danger from the disease (leptospirosis) spread by
rats.
- 25 15) No-one will lose their jobs because of the new system,
because the system must be maintained.
- 16) It is no longer necessary to look for the rats: they
enter the nets automatically while on the move.
- 17) The system continues working during staff illness or
30 holiday.
- 18) The results show yhat the system is highly effective.

The muskrat population can be reduced to and maintained
at an acceptable level within three years. The system is
35 a new application and working method using new and fami-
liar resources. It is effective, economical, environmen-
tally friendly and selective.

I request protection to:

- 1) catch muskrats using tube nets in any form whatsoever,
with one or more flaps and/or throats (funnels with or
40 without flap), used en masse, and all derivatives hereof
- 2) produce or have produced all necessary materials:
tubes, covers, throats, flaps, etc.

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Effective, economical, selective, safer and environmentally
method of catching muskrats using plastic tube nets

Using tube nets placed in large numbers. The ideal size
is 50 cm long and 25 to 30 cm diameter, manufactured
from plastic ((1) fig. 1).
Sealed at the bottom ((3) fig. 1) and provided at the
5 top with one or more flaps ((6) fig.2) or throats
(funnels) ((2) fig.1).
Fitted with escape openings for small animals ((4) fig.
1+2)

10 The core of the problem is that there is currently no
structural and preventive approach, and many unwanted
creatures are trapped.
Using tube nets placed permanently in large numbers of
locations, the muskrats will be trapped while on the
move, before they have chance to breed, quickly reducing
15 the population.

Fig.1

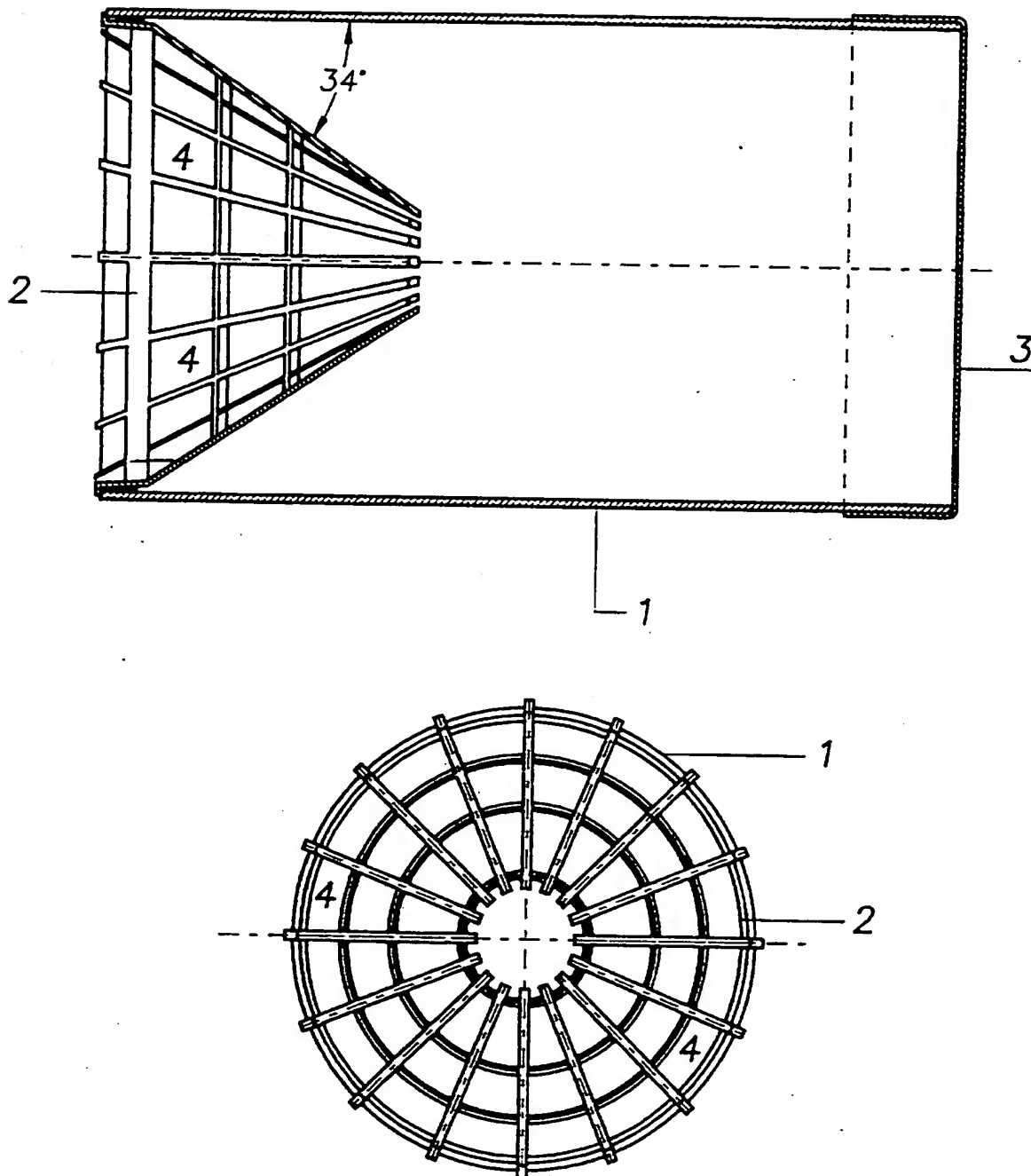
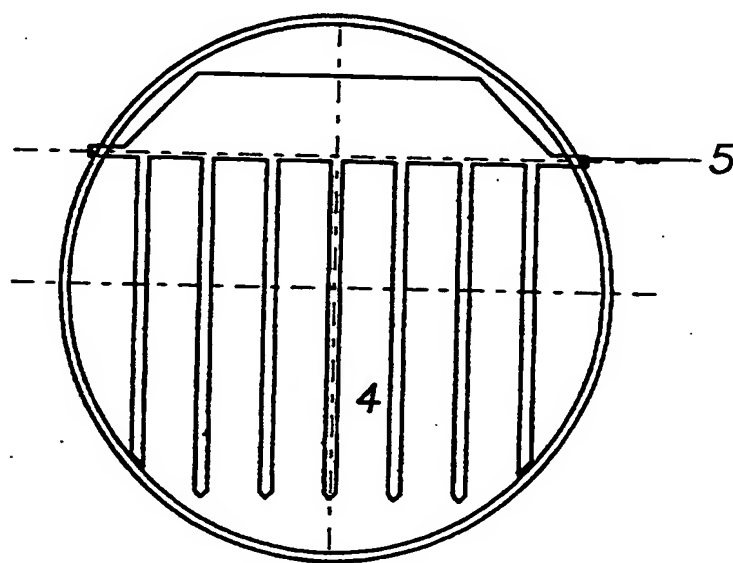
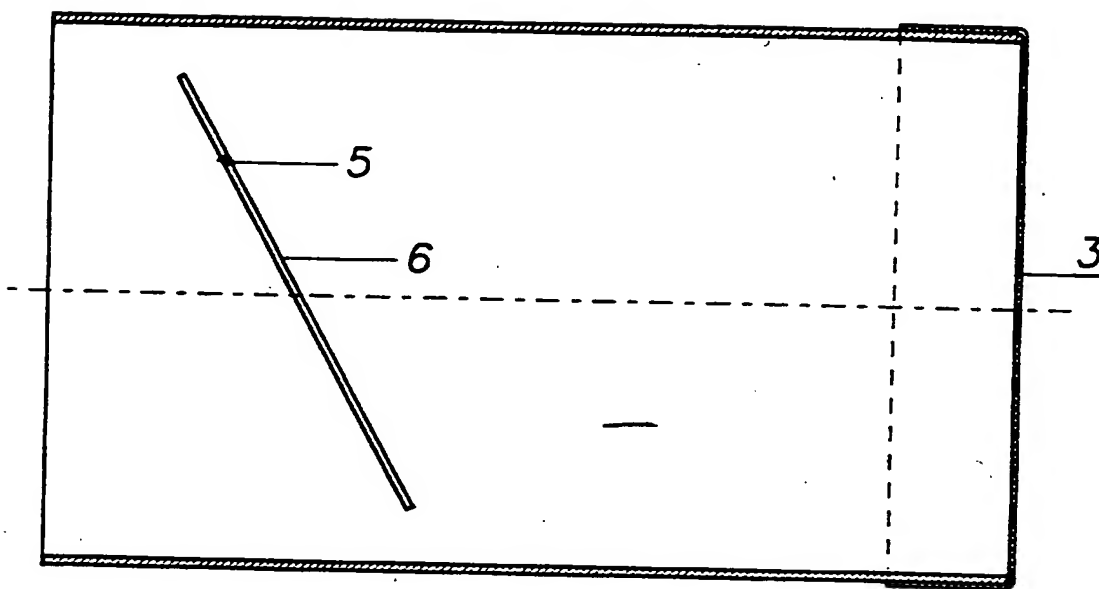


Fig.2



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter: al Application No
PCT/BE 95/00079

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 A01M23/08 A01M23/18

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 6 A01M

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	NL,A,7 607 747 (SCHOLTZEL) 25 January 1977 see the whole document ---	1
A	NL,A,8 902 266 (LOONSTRA) 2 April 1991 see the whole document ---	1
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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Information on patent family members

International Application No

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Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
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AU-B-568974	14-01-88	AU-B- 5609486	05-03-87
DE-C-338760		NONE	